

they were going to lose their opportunity to continue that unemployment check.

There were arguments made on the floor here that these were just lazy people and that if you give them an unemployment check, they will just continue to be lazy and won't go back to work. I don't buy that. I don't believe it. Are some lazy? Well, possibly. I think the vast majority of these people are desperate. They are desperate because they have been laid off or lost their jobs and they need to keep their families together.

Unemployment benefits do that, and they also give fuel to the economy to recover. We were told that by the Chairman of the Federal Reserve and others—to put enough stimulus back in this economy so we can come out of it strong sooner rather than later. I believe that. Yet people like the Republican Senator from Ohio came to the floor talking about the recovery underway and we don't really need to do as much as President Biden had asked for. I disagree.

All across the board, the bill that we passed, whether it is money for schools or money for hospitals or money for clinics or money for administering this vaccine, was money that will be well spent in the State of Illinois and all across the United States.

Now what troubles me is this: Last year, we had two major bills for COVID relief. They talk about five. There were two major bills. The first was in March, the CARES Act that was worth \$2 trillion. That bill passed the Senate after it had been engineered by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin of the Trump administration. It passed the Senate with every Senator voting yes, 96 to nothing. Every Democratic Senator voted for it.

Then came the followup bill in December, some \$900 billion for more COVID relief, for a temporary, first-quarter-of-this-year fix. When you look at the final rollcall there, it was 92 to 6. All six "no" votes were Republicans. Every Democrat who voted, voted for it—again, a Trump proposal that we supported on the Democratic side.

So then the tables turned on January 20, and a new President came to town. Joe Biden said: Let me finish this and do it effectively. Give me an American Rescue Plan.

How many Republican Senators stood up and said: Well, since the Democrats, in the spirit of responding to this pandemic, came around and supported the Trump plans last year, we will do the same this year. The number—zero. Not one Republican Senator supported the bill that passed on Saturday. We passed it with 50 Democratic votes. That is what it took, with one Republican Senator being missing. But what a disappointment that is, to think that this pandemic and the economic crisis that followed was addressed on a bipartisan basis with every Democratic vote in the major legislation last year, and this year,

under President Biden, we couldn't get one Republican Senator to join us in that effort. It is a disappointment, but I hope it isn't a portent of things to come. We have a lot to do, and we need to do it together on a bipartisan basis. The American people are going to count on us to do it.

I also might say a word about the nominations that Senator McConnell referred to earlier. It is true that some of these nominees are getting votes that indicate a strong majority in support, and that does evidence Republican cooperation, and I want to thank them for joining us in that bipartisan spirit. But it evidences something else as well. These are good nominees. These are good men and women who can serve this country effectively. Given the chance, they will, and the votes that have been cast in support of them indicate that as well.

I won't go into the experience 4 years ago with the Trump nominees, but many of them had troubled records, and some of them didn't even file the necessary disclosures before their names were submitted to us for consideration. So there are a lot of things that have changed in the 4-year period of time. Now we have a chance to approve a team for President Biden and to fill out his national security team.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND

Madam President, the last person up is Merrick Garland, nominee for Attorney General. He is, simply put, the right nominee to lead the Justice Department. I believe that is true for three primary reasons: one, his integrity; two, his experience; and three, his humility.

Let me begin with integrity.

The Attorney General occupies a unique role in the Cabinet. Although serving at the pleasure of the President and responsible for implementing his policy initiatives, the Attorney General is also the Nation's law enforcement officer.

The AG oversees a Department that must remain impartial, unbiased, and independent. To balance these two roles requires a nominee who is beyond reproach, who understands the need to separate personal preference from constitutional principles, and who has the courage to stand steadfast in the face of political pressure. Merrick Garland is such a nominee.

As a judge of the DC Circuit for more than 20 years, he has been guided by an abiding faith in the rule of law and a firm commitment to make equal justice for all a reality. It is no surprise, then, that more than 60 former Federal judges and more than 150 former Justice Department officials, appointed by Presidents of both parties, have expressed their strong support for Judge Garland's nomination. They know that Judge Garland will carry his integrity and his independence with him in his new role, and the public will soon see the same integrity and independence in the new Department of Justice, a welcome change from the past 4 years.

Judge Garland also has the experience needed to lead the Department from the first day on the job. Before he served on the DC Circuit, Judge Garland served with distinction in multiple Justice Department roles—as a special assistant to the Attorney General, assistant U.S. Attorney, a deputy in the Criminal Division, and top adviser to the Deputy Attorney General.

We know, of course, it was Judge Merrick Garland who ably and admirably led the investigation and prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing—the worst domestic terrorism attack, to date, in modern American history—and he will, no doubt, draw upon that experience as the Department brings to justice those who perpetrated the hideous January 6 Capitol insurrection and works to prevent further attacks.

But as Judge Garland highlighted at his hearing, his prior tenure at the Department of Justice has also given him insight into what is vital for the Department's success, from the importance of career prosecutors and agents to the breadth of the Department's responsibilities.

Finally, Judge Garland has what I believe to be a characteristic that is often overlooked when we evaluate nominees: humility. He is mindful of the Department's history, a founding rooted in protecting the civil rights enshrined in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments—and he is mindful of just how much work remains in the fight for civil rights.

He is mindful of the enormous power that prosecutors hold and the need to wield that power responsibly. In fact, he told us as much at the hearing when he quoted Robert Jackson, the Attorney General and later Supreme Court Justice, in saying:

The citizen's safety lies in the prosecutor who tempers zeal with human kindness, who seeks truth and not victims, who serves the law and not factional purposes, and who approaches the task with humility.

He is mindful of the opportunities that this country has provided him yet remain elusive for far too many. President Biden nominated Judge Garland to serve with a team of senior Justice Department leaders.

Today, we had a hearing with Lisa Monaco, who is aspiring to be his Deputy Attorney General; Vanita Gupta, who is aspiring to be his Associate Attorney General; and, later, we will have a hearing with Kristen Clarke, who wishes to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

This is an exceptionally well-qualified team of DOJ veterans eager to serve. When the committee reported Judge Garland's nomination, I am happy to report that four Republicans joined all the Democrats, making it a bipartisan rollcall. I think it is worth quoting again. Here is what Judge Garland said:

I come from a family where my grandparents fled anti-Semitism and persecution. The country took us in and protected us.

And I feel an obligation to the country to pay back, and this is the highest, best use of my own set of skills to pay back.

Judge Garland's motivation for serving as the Nation's next Attorney General is powerful, it is honest, and it is humble.

I want to close by coming full circle, so to speak. At Judge Garland's hearing, I noted that, if confirmed, he would be standing on the shoulders of predecessors like Robert Kennedy, who called on Congress to enact sweeping civil rights legislation. Well after that hearing, the committee received a letter from over 30 members of the Kennedy family, and they likened what faces Judge Garland to what faced the young Robert Kennedy as he took up his position as Attorney General. They wrote—the Kennedy family—and I quote:

We are confronted by the same challenges today, particularly in voting rights, in the actions of some of our police officers, and in great disparities in housing, health, and jobs. Merrick Garland's record shows he is dedicated to the kind of justice that does not simply punish but lifts people up so their best selves can be fulfilled.

That is precisely the kind of Attorney General America needs and the kind of Attorney General Merrick Garland will be. I look forward to voting for him, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Ohio.

NOMINATION OF MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting another dedicated and talented public servant and a great Ohioan—my Congresswoman for the last 12 years—MARSHA FUDGE, to be our next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Congresswoman FUDGE is a proud daughter of Ohio. She was born in Cleveland, grew up in Ohio, and graduated from the Ohio State University and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Congresswoman FUDGE has a long and distinguished career serving our State in the Cleveland and Cuyahoga County courts and Cuyahoga County prosecutors' office, as chief of staff to the trailblazing Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and as mayor of Warrensville Heights, OH.

At HUD, Congresswoman FUDGE will work to help protect our kids from lead poisoning, to restore the promise of fair housing, and to give communities the help and the resources that they need. It is a tall order. It is one she is poised to meet.

She brings to the job the unique and critical experience of serving as mayor for the kind of community that is either overlooked or outright preyed upon by Wall Street and by big investors. She understands we can't write off entire swaths of the country—whether it is a coal town in southeast Ohio or a historic industrial city like the one I grew up in, in Mansfield, or

whether it is farm country around Lexington, OH, or whether it is an urban neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland.

This champion of Cleveland understands that. She saw up close how lenders preyed on families and the foreclosure crisis that followed. My colleagues have heard me talk about ZIP code 44105, where Connie and I live, which had more foreclosures in the first half of 2007 than any ZIP code in the United States.

At the time, Congresswoman FUDGE was serving as mayor of a city fewer than 20 miles away. Today, she represents this ZIP code in the United States Congress. Those families are more than just a statistic to her. They are her constituents. They are her neighbors. They are her friends. She knows their story. She knows how, for decades, communities have watched as factories closed, investment dried up, and storefronts were boarded over. She knows how many neighborhoods and towns have never had the investment they should—from Black codes to Jim Crow, to red lining, to the discrimination that President Trump's regulators locked into place. She understands how decades of policy funneled resources and jobs away from Black and Brown communities.

A few years ago, I was talking with local health department officials in Cleveland. I asked them what percentage of the older homes that make up the bulk of Cleveland housing have dangerous levels of lead, those homes built right after World War II or before that. They said 99 percent of those homes have high levels of lead—dangerously high levels of lead.

The families in those homes are Congresswoman FUDGE's constituents. She knows what lead poison does to kids. She knows the local efforts that Ohioans are leading in Cleveland to take this on. She lifts up their voices, which have been drowned out or silenced for too long. She will be a champion for families all over the country who want to be able to afford a home without crippling stress every single month and to be able to build wealth through home ownership to pass on to their children and grandchildren.

Congresswoman FUDGE has dedicated her career to fighting for Ohioans. I am excited she is now going to use all that talent and all that passion and all that empathy to fight for her whole country. I ask my colleagues to support her confirmation to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. President, this weekend, on Saturday, we passed the American Rescue Plan that will put shots in people's arms, kids back in school, money in people's pockets, and workers in jobs. Tens of millions of Americans, including more than 5 million Ohioans, are going to see money in their pockets from stimulus checks and the dramatic expansion of the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

This comes back to, as it always does in politics—the Presiding Officer knows—as it does in government, and it comes down to “whose side are you on?” as this illustrates pretty well. The American Rescue Plan. We all remember—most of us remember—4 years ago, the Trump tax cut for the rich, and the blue here is the American Rescue Plan, which we just passed on Saturday, which the House will probably pass tomorrow, and President Biden will probably sign it this weekend. The lowest numbers—the lowest 20 percent—saw their income go up by 20 percent under our plan. It is barely perceptible how much it went up under the Trump tax plan. But if you go to the top of 1 percent, you can see how much their income went up, and this is to the tune of millions and millions of dollars, and the lowest earners essentially got nothing from the Trump tax plan.

So you can see here in the blue is how our tax bill will put money in the pockets of middle-income people, all the way up—middle-income people, working-class people, the lowest income people—while the Trump tax plan, of course, was helping the richest people in the country.

We see that middle-class and working-class and low-income families are all going to benefit from the American Rescue Plan. This is a broad investment in a whole country—in the vast majority of people, who get their income not from a stock portfolio but from a paycheck. Contrast that with those who benefitted from the McConnell-Trump tax scam. The vast majority of benefits, as we all know, went to those at the top. Again, look at the top 1 percent. They got more from the Washington Republican tax giveaway than anyone else.

At the time, I remember—the Presiding Officer, I think, remembers this; he opposed that bill vigorously, too—Republicans claimed it just wasn't possible—to do their tax bill, it wasn't possible—to avoid giving tax cuts to the richest 1 percent. They just had to. We knew they were wrong then. This has proved they are wrong.

Again, look at the blue and the purple—the benefits that go to the lowest, to middle-class families, working families, and low-income families. Our rescue plan gave literally zero to the top 1 percent. They are doing just fine. The value of their stock portfolio has soared during the pandemic. We invested in everyone else, in the people who were promised more money in their paychecks from the Republican tax scam but never got those raises.

As I said, 4 million Ohioans will get a stimulus check. That is out of 12 million people in the State. Two million Ohio families will get at least a \$3,000 child tax credit. They will get a check—\$250 every month year round. More than half a million Ohio workers will get an expanded earned income tax credit. Those childless families—single people, childless people, some old, a